

TOPIC: NEW CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: ALLOCATIONS TO ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND CORRESPONDING UPDATE TO FINANCIAL AID POLICY

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I. SUMMARY

During the 2015 Legislative Session, the General Assembly passed HB 15-1275 creating a new tuition assistance program for low-income students enrolled in short Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certificates, and appropriated \$450,000 for the program. This item sets forth the staff recommendation for the allocation of the appropriation among the eligible institutions and the necessary revisions to the Commission's financial aid policies. This topic was a discussion item at the Commission's May meeting. This is an action item as both the allocation and policy revisions require Commission approval.

II. BACKGROUND

HB 15-1275 is part of the package of workforce bills that were passed during the 2015 legislative session. It is intended to support career pathways for low-income residents through short-term certificate programs. For FY2015-16 the General Assembly appropriated \$450,000 to implement the program.

The legislation charges the Commission to develop a tuition assistance program for students who meet the income requirements for Pell-eligibility but whose coursework (short certificates) does not. Examples of such short certificates include, but are not limited to, Certified Nursing Assistants, Emergency Medical Technicians, welding certificates, and other short certificates that may lead to employment. Participation is limited to community colleges, local district colleges, area vocational schools, and the community college at Colorado Mesa University.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

In order to implement the legislation, department staff has worked with the Fiscal Affairs and Audit Committee and institutional representatives to develop an allocation method for the first year and to establish guidelines for the administration of the program. The proposed Commission financial aid policy revisions reflect the language in the legislation.

For most financial aid allocations, the Department relies on actual student-level data collected from the institutions to identify the number of students eligible at each institution. Because the short CTE programs are generally not eligible for federal financial aid, students do not typically complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and therefore the students this program is designed to serve have not been included the financial aid data collection. Data collection for the financial aid file will be refined to identify these students in future allocations.

Given the data limitations, for the first year, the workgroup determined that the best approach is to base the allocation upon the number of eligible program certificates produced at each institution using the most recent data available. Department staff collected the program codes from each of the institutions and cross referenced the CTE programs offered against the CTE certificates awarded using the Department's most recent completion file.

Under the proposed allocation, institutions receive a proportional amount of the total appropriation based upon the number of certificates awarded in eligible programs as a percentage of the total number of certificates awarded. The proposed final allocations by institution are in Table 1 below.

Table 1: FY2015-2016 CTE Allocations by Institution

Institution	Allocation
Aims Community College	20,865
Arapahoe Community College	35,497
Colorado Mesa University	4,648
Colorado Mountain College	16,639
Colorado Northwestern Community College	2,536
Community College of Aurora	15,794
Community College of Denver	14,843
Delta Montrose A.V.S.	9,719
Emily Griffith Technical College	12,096
Front Range Community College	88,056
Lamar Community College	1,849
Morgan Community College	7,395
Northeastern Junior College	7,712
Otero Junior College	9,138
Pickens Technical Center	15,953
Pikes Peak Community College	50,657
Pueblo Community College	68,564
Red Rocks Community College	59,109
Trinidad State Junior College	8,927

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the approval of the 2015-2016 CTE allocations in Table 1 and approval of revisions to the Financial Aid Policy in Attachment A.

IV. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Excerpt from HB 15-1275: C.R.S. 23-3.3-1101. Career and technical education certificate programs - tuition assistance - funding. (1) The commission shall establish a tuition assistance

program for students enrolled in career and technical education certificate programs, referred to in this section as "certificate programs". Subject to available appropriations, the commission shall allocate moneys to community colleges, Colorado Mesa University, area vocational schools, and local district junior colleges to provide tuition assistance for students who meet the income eligibility requirements for the federal Pell grant but do not qualify for the Pell grant because the certificate program in which they are enrolled does not meet the Pell grant minimum credit hour requirements. The department of higher education and the institutions that receive tuition assistance moneys pursuant to this section shall administer the program in accordance with policies and procedures that the commission establishes.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A: SECTION VI, PART F, STATE-FUNDED STUDENT FINANCIAL AID POLICY